



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

issue 44
February - March 2007



the Oxford Drinker

Branch pub of the year competition: vote now!

Unfortunately pressure of other business prevented us getting the shortlist ready for the December issue of Oxford Drinker, but voting is now under way for the Oxford CAMRA Pub of the Year, 2006.

All CAMRA members are entitled to vote, and a voting form is included on page 13.

To vote you must visit all seven nominated pubs, get your form stamped to show that you've been, and then rank the pubs in your order of preference.

Don't forget to add your name and CAMRA membership number at the bottom of the form.

Forms can be posted to the address given on the form, or they can be brought along to the March branch meeting (7.30pm on Monday 19th March at the Chester Arms).

The following shortlist of seven pubs were nominated at the

December branch meeting (in alphabetical order):

1. Eagle and Child, 49 St Giles, Oxford, OX1 3LU.
Phone: 01865 302925

2. General Elliot, Manor Road, South Hinksey, Oxford, OX1 5AS.
Phone: 01865 739369
Web: www.generalelliott.co.uk/

3. Harcourt Arms, Cranham Terrace, Jericho, Oxford, OX2 6DG.
Phone: 01865 310630

4. King's Arms, 40 Holywell Street, Oxford, OX1 3SP.
Phone: 01865 242369

5. Lamb and Flag, 12 St Giles, Oxford, OX1 3JU.
Phone: 01865 515787

6. Morris Clown, High Street, Bampton, OX18 2JW.
Phone: 01993 850217

7. Turf Tavern, 4 Bath Place, Oxford, OX1 1SU.
Phone: 01865 243235
Web:
www.theturftavern.co.uk/

Most of the pubs are open all day, except the Harcourt Arms (11am-2pm, 5.30pm-11pm; noon-2pm, 7pm-11am Sunday) and the Morris Clown (5pm-11pm weekdays, noon-11pm Saturday and Sunday).

Most of these pubs are easy to find, but the directions over the page may help for the three less obvious ones.

There are also details of how pubs are judged for the regional and national CAMRA pub of the year competition.

Happy judging and we look forward to receiving your votes!

inside this issue:
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railway area pub crawl
did you know? beer quiz
drinking habits questionnaire
community pubs week update
branch pub of the year voting form

the free newsletter of the
Oxford City Branch of CAMRA
www.oxfordcamra.org.uk

branch pub of the year



Neil Hoggarth

DIRECTIONS

The General Elliot - from the Abingdon Road, walk down Lake Street, use the footbridge to cross the lakes and the railway line and follow the path to South Hinksey - it is an easy walk but is unlit, so take a torch if going in the evening. By car use the South Hinksey turn-off from the A34 ring road. The pub website has a map.

The Morris Clown - if you can arrange a designated driver then driving to the pub of an evening is the easiest thing to do (Bampton is on the A4095, south of Witney); however it is possible to visit the pub by bus on a Saturday afternoon, using service 18 from Oxford (Castle Street stop M1) or service 19 from Witney (Market Square stop B).

The Turf Tavern - from Holywell Street, walk down Bath Place and turn left at bottom just before the Hotel entrance; or from Catte Street, turn into New College Lane, pass under the Bridge of Sighs and walk down the alleyway to your left. The pub website has a map.

JUDGING

Judging for the regional and national CAMRA Pub of the Year competition is done by scoring on the factors listed below. This should give you some idea of what we are looking for in branch Pub of the Year candidate.

Quality of Beer:

Obviously CAMRA are only going to give an award to a pub which consistently serves

excellent real ale. Please note that the pub doesn't need to sell a wide range of beers to score highly. A pub selling a couple of ales in top-top condition is infinitely preferable to one selling seven or eight of variable quality. Also, the fact that a pub is a tied house should not be held against it.

Atmosphere, Style and Decor:

This is partly about the "feel" of the pub - is it a nice place to be? Are you going to want to come back on a regular basis? It is also about the extent to which the most has been made of the actual building. Is the decor appropriate to the type of pub that it is? Does the style show respect for the building? Factors like imagination, taste and restraint all come into play. Pubs don't have to be picture-postcard, unspoilt rural gems to score highly here. Estate pubs, modern city centre bars, back street boozers - all can be excellent in their own terms.

Service and Welcome:

Is the service prompt and friendly? Do you get a full measure without having to ask? The staff in a good pub should regard you as a human being rather than just a potential source of revenue!

Clientele Mix:

A good pub is one where anyone can go in and feel comfortable, whoever they are. If a pub, intentionally or unintentionally, operates in such a way as to exclude some sectors of the community then that counts against it for this competition. A CAMRA Pub of

the Year needs to be inclusive, not exclusive. Look out for whether the pub attracts a good cross section of people and age groups. Is there anything about the pub which might cause discomfort to certain groups?

Sympathy With CAMRA

Aims:

Does the pub espouse and promote our values? Is cask beer given a positive push here? Is information offered about the ales sold? Does the pub try to stimulate interest in the sorts of issues that we are concerned about?

Good Value:

This is about value for money, but in the widest sense of the term (ie. not just how cheap the ales is). Having made the effort to travel to the pub and spend your money, how good a pub experience have you had? This is a bit of a catch-all category and acknowledges the fact that it isn't always easy to pin down exactly why a pub seems so good, but somehow everything comes together and the whole thing works.

Pub-judging can be great fun, especially when you find yourself in a belting pub that you haven't been to before. We hope you enjoy visiting these seven - make it part of your calibration of Community Pubs week!

See page 19 for details of the planned Community Pubs week crawl

beer festival

diary

Saturday 17 February
Merton Beer Festival
 Merton Village Hall, Islip Road,
 Merton, Nr Bicester
 14-15 beers and 3-4 ciders &
 perries

Friday 2 – Saturday 3 March
10th Bristol Beer Festival
 SOLD OUT - tickets for all four
 sessions have now sold out

Thursday 22 – Saturday 24
 March
7th Banbury Beer Festival
 TA Centre, Oxford Road,
 Banbury
 Thu 5-11pm, Fri 12 midday –
 12 midnight, Sat 11am-11pm
 80+ beers plus cider & perry
www.northoxfordshirecamra.org.uk

Wednesday 28 – Friday 30
 March
**London Drinker Beer & Cider
 Festival**
 Camden Centre, Bidborough
 Street, London WC1 (opposite
 St Pancras Station)
 Wed & Thu 12-3, 5-10.30pm,
 Fri 12-10.30pm
www.camranorthlondon.org.uk/ldbfi/index.html

Friday 6 – Monday 9 April
Woodman Beer Festival
 North Leigh, nr Witney
 Easter weekend
 01993 881790

Friday 13 - Saturday 14 April
Coventry Beer Festival
 Coventry Rugby Football
 Ground, The Butts Park Arena,
 Butts Road, Coventry
 85+ beers plus cider & perry
 Fri & Sat noon-4, 8-11pm
<http://uk.geocities.com/covcamra/>

credits....

The *Oxford Drinker* is the newsletter of Oxford CAMRA, The Campaign for Real Ale. It is published bi-monthly in February, April, June, August, October and December. 2000 copies of each one are distributed free of charge to pubs and other drinking establishments across the city and its surrounding area.

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beer styles - part 3



Richard Queralt

STOUT and PORTER continued....

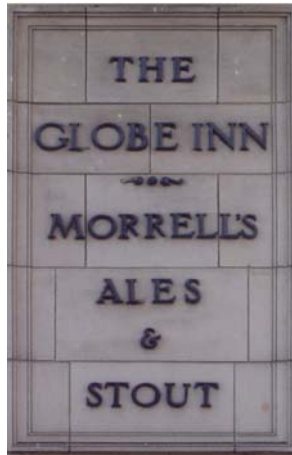
This short series of articles looks at the different styles beer native to Britain. The illustrations are of beer bottle labels. The previous article dealt with the 'invention' of porter in London around 1720 and its evolution to stout, followed by the domination of the stout market in Britain and Ireland by Guinness.



With the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, the use of dark roast malted barley was banned in Britain. This essential ingredient to the brewing of stout was seen as a waste of energy, being used as it was only to provide colour and flavour but very little food value. Limits were also placed on the amount of grain allowed for brewing in general, resulting in weaker beer. These restrictions didn't apply in Ireland, leaving the British stout market open to Guinness.

The company took full advantage of the situation, and with malt rationing continuing for several years after the end of the war, almost every brewery in the land would have been involved in bottling bulk Guinness imported from Dublin in barrels.

When normal service, malt-wise, was resumed, Britain's brewers never regained full control over their stout market. The main reason for this was that Guinness had become very popular. It was a top quality product well made from first class ingredients. It also offered consistency, being available the width and breadth of the country. The late 1920s saw the beginnings of a Guinness advertising campaign, starting out with the slogan on the left, which has resulted in the brand name becoming known around the world and bringing with it a strong brand loyalty that must be the envy of other brewers.



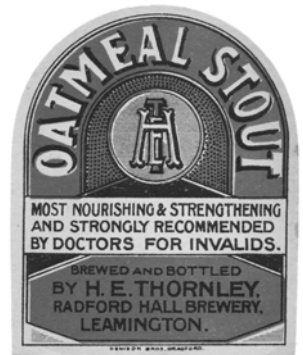
But there's a lot more to the story of stout than Guinness. Besides bottling Guinness, before WW1 any brewery worth its salt would have a least one of its own stouts in its portfolio, as the picture above of the Globe in Cranham Street, Jericho, Oxford shows.

The Globe dates from the 1930s and its future is in doubt as it has been closed since 2004.

The start of the 20th century saw stout being marketed as a healthy drink with almost miraculous restorative powers. This bottle label, below, from Younger's of Alloa, in Scotland, claimed its Special Stout to be 'nourishing, strengthening & invigorating' and 'highly recommended by the medical faculty'.

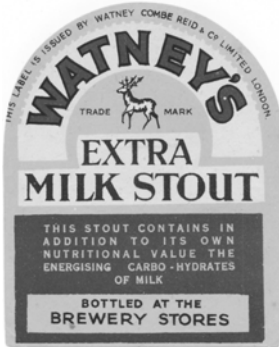


Oatmeal stouts took the health angle a step further. Rolled or milled oats were included in the brew, producing a smoother, creamier stout with extra body.

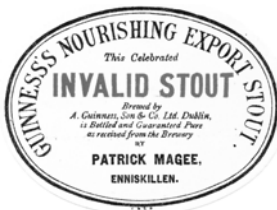


This one (bottom of previous column) from Thornley's of Leamington Spa was 'most nourishing and strongly recommended by doctors for invalids' according to the brewery.

Milk stouts were made using a type of sugar that occurs naturally in milk. This sugar – lactose – was first separated from the milk before being added to the brew i.e. no milk was actually used in the making of the beer. This one from Watney Combe Reid of London points out the 'nutritional value of the energising carbohydrates of milk'.



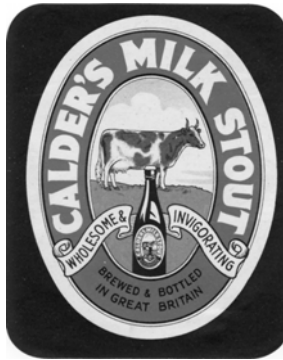
Another milk stout, from Simonds of Reading, advertised itself as 'An Ideal Beverage for the Rheumatic,



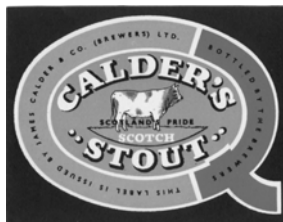
Guinness weren't slow in jumping on this bandwagon, as can be seen above and even today, the world famous stout, with its high iron

content, is still given to blood donors and some post-operative patients in Ireland.

But these weren't all just empty claims. These stouts were high in carbohydrates and were easier to swallow and digest than solids. The alcohol content would also have had a relaxing effect. Some hospitals – the Radcliffe Infirmary in Oxford for instance – had their own brewery on site to supply not just the patients but the staff as well.



In 1939 the government decided to ban the use of the word 'milk' on labels as there was no actual milk in the beer. Brewers soon found ways round this. Calder's of Alloa's labels changed from the example above to the one below, which kept the cow in case anyone was in any doubt.



This became a common dodge among brewers – as they weren't actually telling any lies about their product they couldn't be said to be breaking any laws.

Other examples include this Milk Maid Stout from Warwicks & Richardsons of Newark-on-Trent, Nottinghamshire with its leafy scene of a milkmaid carrying pails of milk.



Fremains of Faversham, Kent used a large milk bottle to press home the point with their Special Stout.



The reason for adding lactose to beer was that, unlike maltose, it doesn't ferment when mixed with yeast, and remains to give the beer an overall sweetness. The sweeter taste was preferred by some drinkers to the dryer, roasted flavours of other stouts.

Glucose is another unfermentable sugar and this too was popular with stout brewers.

Many brewers, such as William Younger's of Edinburgh, below, were happy just calling this type of beer 'sweet stout'.

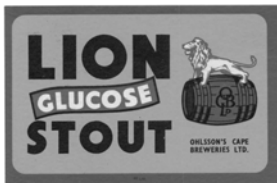


The advent of refrigeration meant beer could be brewed in hotter climates where previously it had to be imported from cooler parts of the world, mainly Europe. Hot countries are usually associated with lighter beers such as lagers rather than stouts. But stout became popular just about everywhere beer was brewed. And, as in Britain, the beer's supposed health-giving properties were used to sell it.



This Nourishing Stout from Ceylon - now Sri Lanka - would be typical of foreign-produced stouts, tending towards the sweet side rather than the dryer taste of imported Irish stouts such as Guinness.

Another, this time from South Africa, makes use of glucose.



And, from Australia, an Invalid Stout.



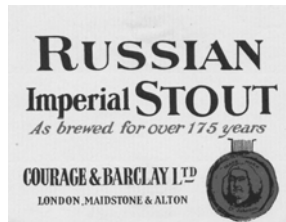
Back home, besides the milk stouts, invalid stouts, oatmeal stouts and the like, there were lots of other different types. There were brown stouts, extra stouts, double stouts, extra double stouts, cream stouts, special stouts, family stouts, malt stouts, oat malt stouts, velvet stouts, XXX stouts and various other permutations. Some of these styles survive today.



Oyster stouts, like the one above from Castletown brewery, Isle of Man, were originally made by boiling whole oysters in the beer

during the brewing process but now are more likely to be an ordinary stout sold as a suggested accompaniment to a plate of oysters - a popular pairing on St Patrick's Day. An example of a real oyster stout is made by Ventnor brewery, Isle of Wight.

Imperial stouts, often called Imperial Russian stouts as they were supposedly supplied to the Russian royal family, would have an alcohol content of around 10-12%. One of these, made to an original Estonian recipe, has been revived by Harvey's of Lewes, East Sussex. Here's an old imperial from Courage. This was last brewed in the mid-1990s but there are still lots salted away in people's cellars and larders.



By coincidence, there's also a Lewes in Delaware, USA and it's here where you'll find what must be the daddy of all stouts, Dogfish Head brewery's World Wide Stout at 18% ABV (alcohol by volume).

During the 1950s/60s when brewers across the country were abandoning cask conditioned beer - real ale - for gassy, bland keg beer, this vast variety of stouts was the biggest victim.

Only a handful of brewers kept faith with real ale and most of these eventually stopped producing stouts. Apart from the ubiquitous Guinness - which by then had also converted to keg - draught stouts had almost vanished. Some bottled stouts remained.

Besides Guinness, there was also Mackeson - the first ever milk stout. This started life in a small brewery in Hythe, Kent before the being bought out by Whitbread and going on to become a national brand. Whitbread and the Mackeson name are now owned by Inbev of Belgium.



Today's Mackeson is made in Lancashire. The bottled version is hard to find but tins are much more widely available. First brewed in 1907, it's now in its 100th year and still has a milk churn as its trade mark.

The good news is that cask conditioned stouts and porters have seen a strong revival during the past ten years. CAMRA's Good Beer Guide details over 130 regularly brewed examples and a healthy number of seasonal versions.

Despite this, real stouts and porters are still a rare sight in our pubs. Probably the best place to sample these beers is a beer festival. For instance, last October's CAMRA Oxford beer festival had around 20 stouts porters on offer, including a milk stout and an oyster stout.

It's not always easy to tell a stout from a porter, by sight or by taste and it's not always clear what the brewer had in mind. Both are typically black though some porters may be dark brown or deep red. Probably the main difference is that porter should get its bitterness from its hop content rather than roasted malt and should have a definite hoppy taste and aroma. Porters generally range from 4-6.5% and stouts 4-8% ABV, though like any other style of beer there's no hard and fast rule.



Several bottled stouts are available from Classic Beers & Wines in Cowley Road, Oxford. These include two Guinness Foreign Extra Stouts (FES) at 7.5% ABV, one from Dublin the other from Nigeria.

The shop also sells bottle-conditioned Cooper's Best Extra Stout, (Australia 6.8%), Dragon Stout (Jamaica 7.5%) and sometimes the marvellous

Lion Stout at 8% from Sri Lanka.

A bottle-conditioned porter to look out for is Meantime's London Porter from Greenwich, London. This comes in a big 750ml bottle. Found in larger branches of Sainsbury's and probably a bit on the expensive side.



The oddity above, from Carlsberg, in Denmark, is no longer made but they still produce stouts, as do several other Scandinavian breweries. The spread of micro-breweries - or craft breweries, as they call them - in the USA and Canada over the last decade has produced a wide and varying range of both stouts and porters. In the West Indies the preference is for sweet stouts and their version of Guinness FES is markedly different to the Irish one.

Several Asian countries and many African countries have been making stouts for decades. And these days they're not just aimed at the enfeebled, we can all benefit from them.

Next issue: Light & Brown

Far From the Madding Crowd

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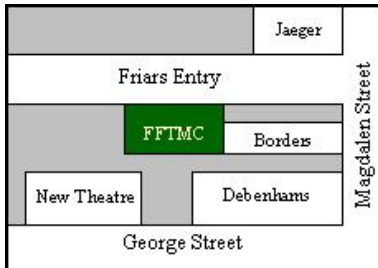
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railway station round trip



Matt Bullock

What happens if you're travelling through Oxford, you change trains and there are leaves on the line, or a big tree has fallen over, so your connection is delayed? What happens if your train is so late you've missed your connection altogether and therefore have a few minutes to kill? What if you deliberately allow half an hour between trains to get a taste of our wonderful city, only to find when you arrive it's fifteen minutes walk to the centre from the station? We set out to find the best pub and the best pint within 300 yards (or 274 metres) of the railway station so that the thirsty traveller doesn't waste valuable seconds finding a suitable hostelry. This is what we found.....

We started at the **Honey Pot** on Hollybush Row. Strangely, many years ago I discovered this pub when doing one of the things I describe above - missing a train at Oxford - but this was in the dim and distant past when the pub was called the Albion, Morrells was



thriving and all looked rosy in the Oxford pub scene. I kind of miss the basic bar and the old, blind bulldog who always bumped into the pool table and knocked in the ball you were tactically leaving over the pocket. I miss the huge £1 doorstep bacon sandwiches, and fondly remember a friend's mistake of ordering two based on the fact he didn't think his hunger would be satisfied for a mere quid. But that was then; and time has moved on. Nearby Morrells are just another name on the expanding list of former family brewers, and after the sale of their pubs, the Albion spent a few months in the clutches of Greene King, when it gained its new image and identity, before being bought by Admiral Taverns.

The new name seems unnecessary, but the internal makeover is pretty successful. During the day, the atmosphere is relaxed and calming, the service attentive, and the beer usually good. It gets noisier in the evenings, and is surprisingly busy considering its location. It was very hot and busy when we visited, but we were in for a disappointment, as there was no beer. The Tim Taylor's Landlord had run out! I can see the pub when sitting at my desk at work, so I've grown reasonably fond of the place, and the Landlord here is usually very good. The bar staff were very apologetic, but we had to make do with Guinness, Hoegaarden and good old Coke. This isn't one of Oxford's 'must see' pubs by any means,

but if killing time at the railway station, assuming the Tim Taylors is available, you could do far worse than here.

Distance from Station: 217m

Directions: diagonally across Frideswide Square, down Hollybush Row

For: good beer (sometimes), relaxing surroundings (sometimes)

Against: noisy at night, beer supply not guaranteed

Conclusion: Shame about the lack of beer



The **Chequers** is the Honey Pot's next door neighbour, separated by a small plot of land where I assume a terraced house has been demolished. Maybe it was demolished when the Chequers was built, as the pub dates from the 1930s. The Chequers has never - in my time in the city at least - been a real ale outlet, but we've included it on our crawl as it meets the criteria of being within 300 yards of the station. Or at least we would have included it in our crawl had it been open - on this Friday night the pub was mysteriously closed.

Distance from Station: 242m

Directions: as for the Honey Pot, a few doors further down

For: interesting building
Against: not open, no real ale
Conclusion: not really worth the extra 25 metre walk

We've called this a crawl, and the first three pubs are so close to each other that you could literally crawl between them, though crossing the road is difficult even when walking, so crawling is not recommended.

The Jam Factory is where Frank Cooper made his 'Oxford' marmalade, so if we're being pedantic its title is strictly misleading - the café based here before the bar did indeed call itself Marmalade. Mr Cooper moved to these purpose-built premises in 1906, but in 1947 production was transferred to new premises in the city, and this notable building was put to other uses. In more recent times it has housed Roots.net, an arts complex and live music venue that for a few months in 2002 had a real ale bar that served West Berkshire beers. This was very short-lived, and 'Marmalade' did not thrive for long, so we can only hope that the new bar does a little better.



Part of its problem is that it's tucked down the side of the building and there's nothing on

the main elevation facing the station to tell you it's here. Maybe this will be addressed in time, as the interior is bright and airy. Whitewashed brickwork, exposed steel beams and rooflights are all reminders of its time as an industrial building, but modern furniture and artworks make the interior pleasant. It's quiet enough to have a sensible conversation, too. The beers are supplied by the Cotswold Brewery of Foscot, and are all keg lager style, served cooler than real ale of course, but not ice cold so you can taste the beer, and it does have flavour. Three Point Eight (3.8%, not surprisingly) is the session beer, a lager with some hoppy bitterness that reminds you of a hoppy pale ale. Yes, it's keg, and it's fizzy, but it does have a lot of flavour. Other beers are Premium (5.0%) and Winter (5.3%), the former a more standard lager flavour and the latter a strange darker beer, but if you refuse to try the keg beers there are a few good bottled beers available too.

Distance from Station: 199m
Directions: diagonally across Frideswide Square, it's on the corner
For: unusual beers, good food, free olives
Against: keg only; looks grim from the outside
Conclusion: Don't let snit-lager prejudices prevent you trying the beers

Our final two planned venues are the other side of the tracks, literally, so to access them you have to join Botley Road and go under the railway bridge. Oxford's railway bridge is notorious for trapping high-sided lorries and decapitating double-decker buses, and although the road has been

dug out to increase headroom, it still occasionally catches the unwary. Indeed, travel at the front of a double-decker bus passing under the bridge today and you'll be convinced you're about to hit it. Just past the bridge and the legendary Mick's café is the **White House**, and old building that was once the toll house on the Witney to Botley road.



The current building, built in 1850, served for a few years as the toll house until the toll house was moved further out from the city in 1868. The pub was once known as the Old Gate House but is now the White House. It is a sort of restaurant and bar, but does neither convincingly and the pub was quiet and fairly empty until we arrived, and reverted to this after we left. The two beers were London Pride and Brakspear, and like the pub they were adequate but not spectacular; the service was friendly and the free sweets on the bar were nice (though I think they were intended for diners), but nothing about the pub was really that special or memorable.

Distance from Station: 54m
Directions: Back under the railway bridge, on the right
For: closest to the station
Against: Unremarkable
Conclusion: Bland

Once promoted as a gay venue, with little success, the **Kite** is now in the capable and large hands of Aussie Pete McGarry, and it's again thriving as a back street local that welcomes all, with the exception of the odd city councillor.



This is a typical local back street boozier, with good beer and cheap food served to a lively and appreciative crowd. We got a table, which was a surprise seeing how busy the pub was, and the Greene King

IPA was supplemented by Batemans XXXB and the newly arrived Olde Trip, a first taste of Greene King's attempt at a Hardy and Hanson beer. The XXXB was familiar and good, the Olde Trip was less impressive but I suspect that this was under to Greene King and not to Pete's cellarman-ship. There are many people in Oxford who still do not know that the Kite exists, but it's one of the city finest traditional pubs, so would be my number one choice for beer and atmosphere for the delayed train traveller.

Distance from Station: 161m
Directions: Back under the railway bridge, first left into Mill Street
For: good value food and beer
Against: very little
Conclusion: A fine pub

The closure of the Chequers allowed us a last orders visit to another back street pub, the **Watermans** on Osney Island.

Braving the raging torrent that was the Thames, we walked down to the pub that enjoys a position overlooking the river just down from Osney Lock. Another Greene King pub, the Watermans has IPA and Morland Original as its stock beers; sadly the latter was temporarily unavailable at the time of our visit. The pub again does a heaving trade from good value food and well-kept beer, and is rare in retaining a bar billiards table. It's a longer walk from the station than my 300 yard limit, so may not be one for the rail traveller, but in the local pub market, this is a fine example.



obituary - colin lantham

It was with great regret that we learnt of the sudden death, on 29 December, of Colin Lanham. Colin was CAMRA Regional Director for our region (Central Southern) from 2000 to 2004. He was only 57 years of age.

Colin had been a member of CAMRA since the early years, and for more than a decade up until his death he was a tireless campaigner for the organisation. He took over as Central Southern Regional Director during a difficult period, after the post had been vacant for some time, and proved to be an inspirational leader who helped pull the

region back together.

At the time of his death Colin was busy organising the first major beer festival to be undertaken by the Berkshire South-East branch, an event to be held in March in association with Ascot Racecourse. The festival will still go ahead as Colin had planned it, and the racecourse management will dedicate it to Colin's memory as a token of the great respect they had for him after only a few months' acquaintance.

Although Colin will be missed immensely for his contribution to CAMRA, his loss will be felt most of all by his many friends

for his dry sense of humour and his warm companionship.

I am sure that all Oxford CAMRA members will join with me in expressing our sincere condolences to his wife, Teresa, as well as to his many friends and colleagues in the Berkshire South-East branch and throughout the region.



The Masons Arms

2, Quarry School Place Headington Oxford
01865 764579



Oxford CAMRA Pub of the Year 2004 & 2005

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Hook Norton Old Hooky
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Oxford City CAMRA Pub of the Year 2006

Please use this form (or a photocopy) if you wish to vote in the Oxford City CAMRA Pub of the Year contest. You must visit the seven pubs listed below and **get your voting form stamped by each pub**. When you have visited all the pubs then rank them in order of preference: **indicate "1" for your favourite, down to "7" for your least favourite**. Make sure that you put a score beside each pub, and that you use each number between 1 and 7 only once.

Remember the criteria for the competition when voting: as well as beer quality consider the ambience, the welcome, the service, the knowledge and helpfulness of the staff, the pub's attitude towards CAMRA, and how it promotes real ale compared with other products.

Once you have visited all the pubs and filled out the form then return it to:

Oxford CAMRA, 104a Hurst Street, Oxford, OX4 1HG

to arrive by **Saturday 17th March 2007**, or present it in person at the **branch meeting on Monday 19th March**, to be held from 7.30pm at the Chester Arms, Chester Street (off the Iffley Road).

Many thanks for taking the time to vote, and we hope you enjoy your visit to these seven fine pubs.

Pub Name	Pub Stamp	Rank
1. Eagle and Child		
2. General Elliot		
3. Harcourt Arms		
4. King's Arms		
5. Lamb and Flag		
6. Morris Clown		
7. Turf Tavern		

Name:	
CAMRA Membership No:	



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**A Beer Swillers "Did You Know ...?" by Hop Bine.**

- 1) What is a "sconce"?
 - (a) An Oxford University beer challenge.
 - (b) A small semi-private room in an English pub.
 - (c) A loud, boorish drunk.

- 2) In 1959, Ermal Cleon Frazee invented something for which drinkers everywhere will be eternally grateful. What was it?
 - (a) The bendy straw.
 - (b) Alka-Seltzer.
 - (c) The ring-pull.

- 3) What is a "Dog's Nose"?
 - (a) A cocktail of beer and gin.
 - (b) A traditional English name for a hop-masher's pummel.
 - (c) A weeping sore on the lips caused by drinking from dirty glasses.

- 4) What is a "God forbid me"?
 - (a) A very strong beer, brewed one day a year by Franciscan Friars.
 - (b) A mixture of rum, gin and sour milk, used as a morning-after "never again" cure.
 - (c) An enormous two-handed drinking mug.

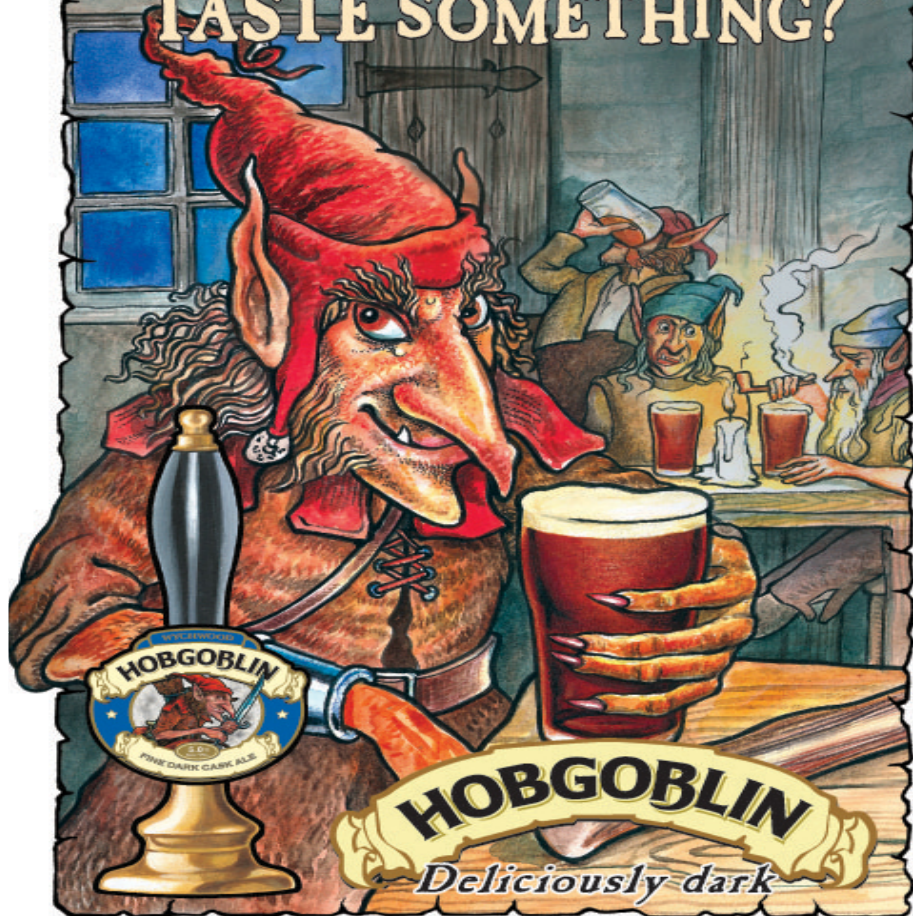
- 5) In 1814, a huge storage vat of porter collapsed in Liquorpond Street, London.
It destroyed three houses, part of the brewery and drowned/killed eight people.
True or false?

- 6) What is the strongest proof any liquor can be?
 - (a) 92%
 - (b) 99%
 - (c) 97%

- 7) What is a Mackie?
 - (a) A well known Oxford City CAMRA member.
 - (b) a tall fount: a pillar tap on a bar used to dispense real ales in Scotland.
 - (c) A mixture of dark ale and whisky.or you might know differently!

Have a go then turn to page 20 to check your answers.

“WHAT’S THE MATTER
LAGERBOY,
AFRAID YOU MIGHT
TASTE SOMETHING?”



HOBGOBLIN

Deliciously dark

what's on

Neil Hoggarth

Saturday 10th February,
2pm

Regional Meeting

Old Manor, Bracknell.

Friday 16th February,
Evening

Branch Social

Merton Winter Beer Festival. Catch a number 94 bus from St Giles (northbound, nr the Ashmolean Museum) at 5.10pm or 6.10pm. Return journey will need to be by taxi to Bicester and bus from there back to Oxford.

Saturday 17th February,
9.30am

Beer Festival Helper's trip.

Coach outing to Cheltenham and Gloucester. Volunteer workers at last year's Oxford Beer Festival should receive details from the staffing officer

shortly. We shall want to fill the coach, so extra places may be available at cost to non-workers.

Monday 19th February,
7.30pm

Branch Meeting

Gladiator's Club, 263 Iffley Rd, Oxford. Good Beer Guide selection meeting.

Friday 23rd February,
7pm

Community Pubs Crawl

Starting from the Somerset, Marston Road (see ,,,,,, for more details).

Friday 16 March,
7pm

Oxford Drinker Crawl

Corner House, Wood Farm then via pubs across to Cowley Road

Monday 19th March,
7.30pm

Branch Meeting

Chester Arms, Chester Street (off Iffley Rd).

Branch Pub of the Year voting deadline.

Friday 23rd March,
Evening

Branch Social

Banbury Beer Festival, Banbury TA Centre. Catch the 18:07 train from Oxford Station to Banbury.

Please note: From February, branch meetings will be held on the 3rd Monday of the month.

Members and non-members are welcome at all events. Further details are available at branch meetings, on our website www.oxfordcamra.org.uk or by

classic wines?

David Hill

Classic Wines at 245 Cowley Road, just past the Aziz restaurant, is, despite its name, more of a specialist beer shop than a wine merchant. As far as I know, the only other place locally with a selection of bottled beers as interesting is the Grog Shop on Kingston Road in north Oxford so for those who live in the eastern part of the city this is the place to go for takeaways.

It is a long narrow shop where you are impeded by stacks of various beverages - they stock a wide selection of soft drinks as well. All down the left hand side of the shop, bottles of beer are displayed, and a good selection there is too, from many different countries.

These include a number from Coopers of Adelaide, Jamaican Dragon Stout (7.4%), Guinness Foreign Extra (7.5%), Belgian Duvel and Chimay, and the Dutch La Trappe Dubbel, Tripel and Quadrupel. There are a number of German beers, including the Riedenburger organic wheat beer and organic lager, and somewhat unusually a good number of French beers, mostly bottle conditioned, and from small breweries in different regions, reflecting the renaissance in French brewing in recent years.

There are also quite a number of British beers, including bottle conditioned. And on the couple of occasions that I have been at the shop, there have been a handful of beers just beyond their sell-by dates being sold at about half-price. These are worth looking at as beers of this age are more likely to have improved than deteriorated. Altogether recommended as a good community resource for the people of east Oxford.

Dick and Lin welcome you to the

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community pubs week



It's been said before, but it really is a frightening statistic that at least 26 pubs are closing in Britain each month and early indications of new research being carried out by CAMRA suggest that this figure could actually be significantly higher. Worse still, the majority of these pubs are not faceless chain bars, theme pubs or kids' pubs, but community pubs, recognised by most people these days, as important local social amenities.

There are many pubs locally that are potentially at risk, especially with high property prices escalating the value of pub sites to far greater levels than can ever be realised by continuing to operate as pub. The only way to prevent this, aside from vociferous objection at planning meetings where change of use is sought, is to persuade more people to visit more pubs more of the time. CAMRA members across the country have worked hard to promote pub-going in response to the growth in home drinking and huge supermarket discounting of alcohol. Prices aside, nothing can match the British pub for its service and atmosphere.

CAMRA's Community Pubs Week is intended to help raise the profile and importance of pubs in the community and encourage people of all ages and backgrounds to use community pubs more.

Now we, of course, can't organise this for you. You've just got to get up off the sofa, walk down the road, and try it for yourselves. But if you do need some guidance or encouragement, then we can offer some assistance.

Meet us on Friday 23 February at the **Somerset**, on Marston Road in New Marston. We'll be gathering there at 7pm.



From here we intend to visit a selection of pubs that typify the breed: a mix of estate pubs in New Marston and Northway and village style establishments in Old Marston. Community Pubs Week is meant to celebrate and promote all community pubs - not just village locals, but urban gems too.

Hopefully the chosen cross section will not disappoint. Why not join us for an enjoyable evening crawl, whilst doing your bit to prove to the pubcos and major brewers that the drinking public does still care?

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Oxford Trading Standards
01865 815000

inn and around oxford



A planning application has been submitted for change of use for the **Wharf House**. The application is for demolition and construction of flats.

The **Elm Tree** on Cowley Road has been shut for several months. There are now notices in the windows saying it will be opening soon as the "Lan Kwai Fong" Cafe-Bar.

The Trout at Godstow is currently closed for refurbishment and is due to reopen on 14 March.

Several former Greene King pubs in our area were sold to Admiral Taverns in late November last year, including the **Fox at Sandford** and the **Crown** in Charlton on Otmoor.

John Westendorp, already well known to the branch as landlord of the General Elliot in South Hinksey, will be taking on the tenancy of the Fox at Sandford, with the help of manager Peter King. John tells me that he hopes to offer Harvey's as a regular beer, plus guest beers.

Our Otmoor correspondents, Fin and Loz of Merton, tell me that the landlord of the Crown is also looking forward to making use of the greater choice of beers available to an Admiral pub.

The freehold of the **Cricketer's Arms** in Littleworth, which is currently a privately owned free house, is apparently for sale. In July last year,

residents of Littleworth and CAMRA successfully objected to a change-of-use planning application which would have allowed conversion of the pub to residential property, arguing that as the only pub in Littleworth the Cricketer's should be protected as an essential community facility. We wish the pub's current owners, Mr and Mrs Whittaker, all the best for their retirement, and we hope that the pub is bought by someone with an interest in continuing the business.

The **Radcliffe Arms** in Jericho is undergoing an internal refurbishment. Sadly, this has led to all the windows being replaced in upvc, including the rare Northampton Brewing Company etched glass windows - NBC once owned the pub. The panes of glass have been saved, but will no longer be in their rightful and original location. Such a shame - I'm sure a refurbishment could have been carried out that could have kept them intact.

The **Victoria**, Walton Street, has been closed temporarily following the death of the landlord.

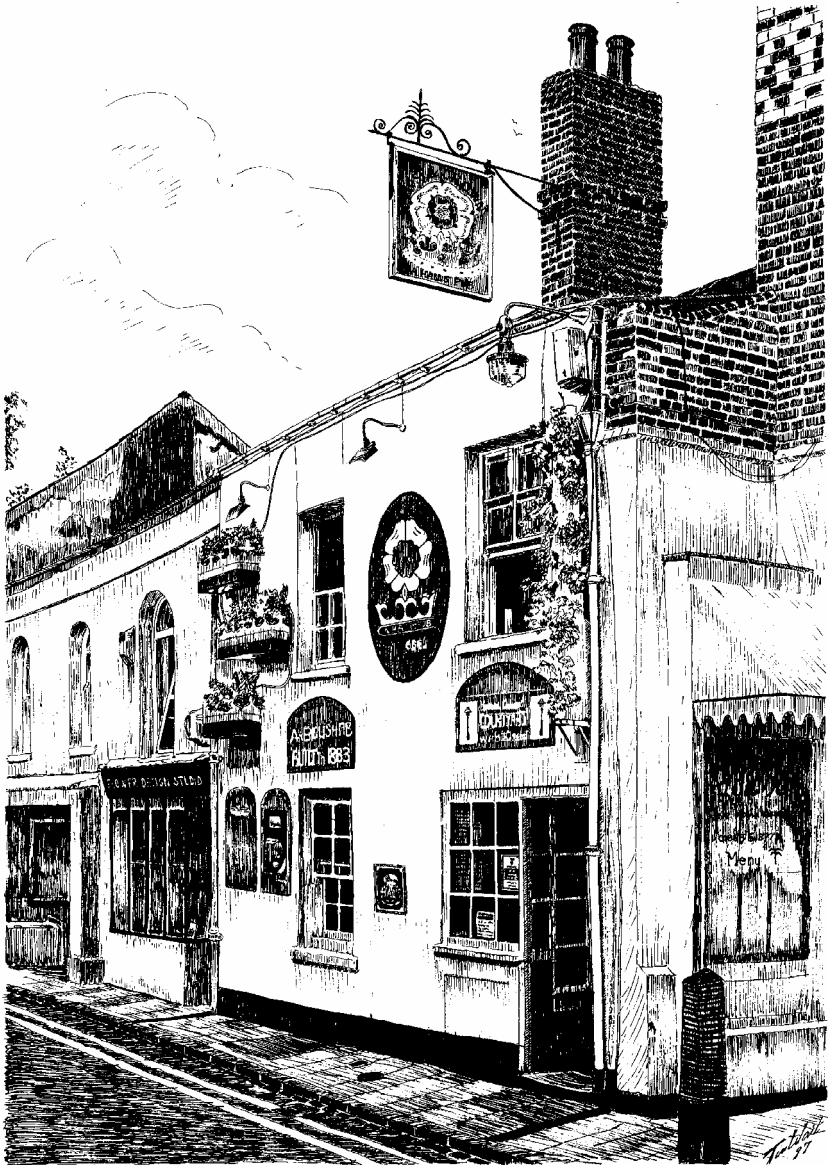
In issue 42 we mentioned the intention of Des O'Toole, the landlord of the **Bell** at Hampton Poyle, to sell up and relocate to Spain. We can now tell you that Des closed the pub at the beginning of January and left for Spain at the end of that month.

Des took on the pub, in this small village, over seven years ago and kept to his vision of running it without food, making sure his real ale, real cider and Guinness were always in good condition. He told us that the intention of the new owner is to build houses or flats on the land at the rear but to extend the present pub and convert it into a restaurant with a bar. If this happens it will be better than nothing but the basic truth is that, sadly, another village has lost its last pub. Des deserves great credit for swimming against the tide and keeping a proper village pub. We wish him well.

did you know?

ANSWERS

- 1 (a) An Oxford University beer challenge.
- 2 (c) The ring-pull.
- 3 (a) A cocktail of beer and gin.
- 4 (c) An enormous two-handed drinking mug.
- 5 True.
- 6 (c) 97%
- 7 (b) a tall fount - but could also be (a)!



Oxford City CAMRA Pub of the Year 2001
Listed in the Good Pub Guide 2006
www.rose-n-crown.co.uk

drinking habit questionnaire

by Alistair Pitman



Last year I wrote an article about the regional tasting panel and mentioned how being a CAMRA member had improved my drinking habits by encouraging me to drink the best beers in the best pubs.

I am curious about other people's drinking habits and would like to improve my own pubs skills and help other people improve theirs, so I have compiled a short questionnaire to find out about how people drink their beer and enjoy their pubs. I have filled in my own answers to each.

How do you choose your ale?

Know your ale! I systematically try all of the most commonly available ales and all of the different styles of ale such as mild, golden ale, blond beers, summer ales, winter ales, porter and stout. Be fussy when choosing your ale.

Choosing your pub or pubs for the night

I either have a quick pint at my local, drive to a pub and have dinner and a pint, go on a crawl of the best pubs or a CAMRA survey crawl. I favour different pubs depending on what mood I'm in and what type of session. I know most of the pubs in the Oxford area.

What is your advise for the lone drinker

Don't be lazy and drink at home or always in your local but choose a pub for its ambience. I never drink at home on my own.

What advise would you give to someone that has never been to a beer festival before?

If your not sure about a beer at a festival you can usually ask for a taster before you buy. You can always ask for a sample at a CAMRA beer festival. I always have halves at a festival so that I can try more beer.

I like to start with a weak beer with a subtle flavour and then progress onto stronger darker ales. I start with a beer of less than four percent alcohol, then mild, then golden beer or blond beer, then bitter, then porter, then stout.

What advise would you give to someone that is planning a pub crawl?

- Not too many pubs
- Only a short walk between pubs
- Have a map if you don't know the area

You can buy books with lists of pub crawls in and maps but I get mine from the internet. I also go on family pub crawls a few times a year with some of my relatives. Usually with my father, two brothers in law, sometimes my brother and occasionally a cousin.

Pub snacks?

I like my pub snacks and they help me keep my beer down. I usually tear open a packet of crisps and put them towards the middle of the table so that everyone can try them. My favourite crisps were

Johnathans, but now Tyrells, because they have a lot more flavour and a better consistency. The Tyrells chilly flavour are particularly hot. I like all pub snacks from pork scratchings to beef jerky and stuffed olives. Some snacks compliment some beers but I don't usually try to match snacks to beers. On a pub crawl on Friday I saw some crisp packet origami.

What do you line your stomach with?

I always eat carefully before drinking a lot. If it's an all day session I try to get a fry up at a greasy spoon or at least a few sandwiches. I don't have a large meal in the evening if I'm out drinking. I usually avoid fish and never a salad.

How do you savour your ale?

I take on average 40 minutes to drink a pint and try never to rush a pint. Beer tastes better in glass than in a bottle because you get more aroma.

Other comments

If you would like to tell us about your drinking habits, e-mail Sam, the editor, with your completed questionnaire and we will print the results in a future edition of the Oxford Drinker.

As an introduction, write a little bit about yourself and for any other comments include anything that is relevant but isn't covered in the questionnaire.

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detach and retain this section

OXFORD CITY CAMRA



NEEDS
YOU

A Pubs Database has been set up on the Oxford City CAMRA website which shows all the pubs and bars listed in the region. This can be searched by pub name, town or postcode. The information on each pub is very limited at the moment and this is where you come in.....

We would love to hear from you about your local pub or any you visit in our region. Just look up the pub on the database and click on 'Send a comment'.

We try to visit pubs across our region as much as we can, often visiting hard to reach pubs in one of our car trips but we always on the look out for great pubs in our area which we may have missed or not visited for some time.

www.oxfordcamra.org.uk/pubs.php